policies and decisions of the Government and NPPA etc. Follow up action has been initiated on the recommendations of the Committee made in its interim report.

Revival of Talcher fertilizer plant

† 3896. SHRI SURENDRA LATH:
SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering any proposal for revival of Talcher fertilizer plant of Fertilizer Corporation of India; if so, the outline thereof; and

(b) if not, whether Government are considering on handing over the said plant to private sector, if so, the details of the action-plan thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) The coal based fertilizer plants Fertilizer Corporation of India Ltd. at Talcher was closed due to its techno-economic unviability. The revival of the plant is possible only through setting up a new-modern fertilizer plant based on viable feedstock.

(b) No such proposal is pending.

Drug Pricing Policy

3897. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of various instances where drug companies are pricing their medicines very high, having no relevance to their intrinsic value;

(b) whether the matter has been investigated and if so, the outcome of the findings; and

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) what efforts have been made by Government to ensure that medicines are reasonably priced for the general public and are of good quality?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (c) The 74 bulk drugs specified in the First Schedule of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995 (DPCO, 95) and the formulations based thereon are under price control. Action against companies who have overcharged is taken under para 13 of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995. Prices of non-Scheduled formulations are fixed by the manufacturers themselves, however, the Government takes corrective measures where the public interest is found to be adversely affected.

The Drug Policy, as amended from time to time, is directed towards ensuring abundant availability of quality drugs at reasonable prices. A Committe under the Chairmanship of Joint Secretary (PI) was constituted to examine the span of price control (including trade margin) in the light of National Common Minimum Programme and the observations of the Supreme Court in SLP NO (C) 3668/2003 and to suggest measures for fulfilling the objective of National Common Minimum Programme to ensure the availability of life saving drugs at reasonable prices. This Committee has submitted its interim report to the Government. The Committee has recommended, *inter-alia,* intensive monitoring on the prices of all those drugs out of the selected basket (National List of Essential Medicines, 2003) which are not under price control, ceilings on trade margins of drugs, a system of price negotiations for the new patented drugs, special schemes for people below poverty line, introduction of Rajasthan Model of Life Line Fluid Stores (hospital pharmacy stores run by Medicare Societies) for bulk purchase of drugs directly from manufacturer and selling them at reduced prices, compounding of offences under the Essential Commodities Act, establishment of DPCO cells in all States on the model of Karnataka, price negotiations at the time of launching of a new patented drug, efforts to increase public avareness, wide publicity to policies and decisions of the Government and NPPAetc.

ATask Force has been constituted under the Chairmanship of the Principal Advisor (PP), Planning Commission to explore various options other than price control for achieving the objective of making available life-saving drugs at reasonable prices.